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International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Concluding observations on the combined twentieth to twenty-second periodic reports of Greece

Addendum

Information received from Greece on follow-up to the concluding observations*

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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1. Greece has the pleasure to hereby submit, in accordance with article 9 (1) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and rule 65 of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination's rules of procedure, information on the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee in paragraphs 23 (e), 23 (f) and 25 (b) of its Concluding Observations, dated 3 October 2016, following the consideration of Greece's second periodic report on 3 and 4 August 2016.

Para. 23 (e): Facilitate access to education for all migrant children and, to that end, increase the necessary human, technical and financial resources and provide training to teachers and other personnel involved

2. Greece guarantees the right to education. More specifically, pursuant to article 16 of the Constitution, education is one of the basic missions of the State and every Greek citizen is entitled to it, at all levels, free of charge.

3. The objectives of Greek education are clearly stated in a series of Laws (Law 1566/1985, etc.). The basic aim of primary and secondary education is to contribute "to the complete, harmonious and balanced development of the intellectual, psychological and physical potential of the pupils, so that, ***regardless of their gender or origin***, they may become fully developed personalities, living in harmony".

4. *All children, including minor aliens* (even when lacking complete documents) have the right to a 9-year minimum compulsory education, according to article 40 of Law 2910/2001 and various Presidential Decrees.

5. In this context, the **Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs**, in school year 2016–2017, drew up an effective and flexible **Action Plan** for the education of refugee and migrant children, based on the recommendations *of a* ***Scientific Committee for the Support of Refugee Education***, set up as an advisory body by decision of the Minister of Education in March 2016 (GG1/47070 of 18/03/2016). Through this Plan, the Ministry aims at ensuring the psychosocial support and the integration of these children in the Hellenic educational system, following a transitional, preparatory period.

6. The Plan is differentiated according to the age groups of children and their special needs and conditions, taking into consideration the two types of accommodation of refugee population, either:

- "**Site-based**", in **Refugee Accommodation Centers** (i.e. population placed temporarily in open sites); or
- "**Off-site**" (i.e. population residing in rented apartments, hotels or shelters), beneficiaries of the UNHCR accommodation scheme or other accommodations supported by NGOs and municipalities.

7. For the education of children living in Refugee Accommodation Centers ("site-based"), starting from school year 2016-2017, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has established the Reception School Annexes for Refugee Education (RSAREs). These Centers are specially designed as a transitional, intervention scheme aiming to ensure gradual integration of refugee children into the educational system, whether in Greece or elsewhere in Europe. They operate in school districts with Refugee Accommodation Centers and form part of the existing schools of primary (ages 6–12) and secondary education (ages 12–15). The Centers are run on a second shift basis from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Refugee children can enroll even in cases of lack of official documents (MoE circular dated 24.4.2017).

8. Refugee children aged **0–4 years** remain under the responsibility of their parents. Those aged **4–7 years** remain close to their parents (in the Accommodation Centers, if parents reside in them) and attend preschool educational activities *in kindergartens within the Centers*, with Greek-speaking kindergarten teachers, so that children will gradually learn to communicate in Greek.

9. Children aged **7–12 years** attend second shift Reception Classes in public primary schools neighboring to the centers, with the exception of limited cases where nearby

schools are not sufficient to include all refugee children residing in the Accommodation Centers. In these cases, classes are held in suitable spaces or in the reception centers.

10. Children **12–15 years** who have completed primary and/or some other type of secondary education in their country attend second shift reception classes in public secondary schools, with the exception of limited cases where nearby schools are not sufficient.

11. Children of all ages living in "**Off-site**" Accommodations (flats, hotels etc.) attend regular morning public schools near to their residence. In the "Reception Classes", supplementary teaching and tutorial support is provided. In these classes Greek language lessons are taught assuring to all equal access to the educational system. According to the needs, Reception Classes can operate in Zones of Educational Priority/ZEP of all Regional Directorates of Primary and Secondary Education of the country, within the existing units of primary and secondary education (Primary, Lower and Higher Education Schools, Vocational Schools).

12. Students aged **15–18 years** can either attend Reception Classes of General or Vocational Upper Secondary Schools or other types of technical or vocational schools. For the enrolment of those aged 15–18 years in General or Vocational Upper Secondary Schools, a Lower Secondary School leaving certificate is required. Integration of teenagers and adults into technical and vocational education schemes is rather complicated, due to lack of an adequate system of certification of the refugees' qualifications obtained in their country of origin.

13. Refugee-migrant and foreigner students can optionally enroll in the ***Schools of Intercultural Education*** (*see below*).

14. **Children with special needs**: policies and pilot actions in this field are designed by the Scientific Committee members' experts.

15. **Unaccompanied children and adolescents**: pending clarifications on their legal status and the responsibilities of the Public Offices of the Ministries involved in the protection of unaccompanied children, actions will be designed by members of the Scientific Committee for the support of these refugee children.

16. It should be added that the first RSAREs opened on October 10th 2016. Since then, about 110 Reception School Annexes have been established in 34 Accommodation Centers all over Greece, covering the administrative regions of Attica, Central Greece, Western Greece, Thessaly, Epirus, Central Macedonia, Eastern Macedonia and Thrace.

17. For the opening of the RSARE, three Ministries collaborate:

- *The Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs* (establishing a Working Group on the Management, Coordination and Monitoring of the Refugee Education);
- *The Ministry of Health* (establishing a Working Group on the Vaccination of refugees), for the vaccination scheme;
- *The Ministry of Migration Policy* (responsible for the infrastructure of the Centers).

18. The open curricula and course schedules implemented in the RSAREs are designed by the *Institute of Educational Policy* (IEP), which is the MoE's institution competent for primary and secondary school education curricula, in cooperation with the *Scientific Committee for the Support of the Refugee Education*. The curricula include Greek language courses, Mathematics, English, Computer Science, Physical Education and Arts. For the teaching and learning of Greek language are introduced teacher guides and textbooks that have been developed and used in the Schools of Intercultural Education for teaching Greek as a second language, after they have been duly amended.

19. The MoE, through the *Institute of Educational Policy* (IEP), taking into consideration the legal framework (Law 4415/2016, GG 159/v. A/6.9.2016) on Intercultural and Refugee Education and the educational needs arising from the refugee influx, has:

(a) Appointed *Refugee Education Coordinators* (RECs) for each Refugee Accommodation Center, having as main duty to ensure the proper function of the RSARE, by establishing and coordinating channels of communication between the parties involved;

(b) Initiated the action "Training interventions for the support of refugee children education", that includes:

- Training of refugee education coordinators (RECs);
- Training of school advisors responsible for the RSARE (primary and secondary education);
- Support of RSARE teachers, organizing "on site" visits and registering the educational procedure taking place in the RSARE;
- Development of supportive educational material.

20. It should be stressed that Refugee Education Coordinators are highly qualified and experienced educators, responsible for the coordination, operation and supervision of the RSARE, as well as its educational staff.

21. Moreover, the educational staff (i.e. teachers, detached in the Reception School Annexes for Refugee Education or supplementary teachers), has experience in the field and/or a postgraduate degree in intercultural education or teaching of Greek as a second language. Teachers receive special training before taking up their post and throughout their mandate.

22. The Institute of Educational Policy (IEP) has also developed an accreditation procedure for NGOs' activities in Greece relating to refugee children (5–18 years old). NGOs submit their educational programme via a specific platform (https://www.iep.edu.gr/services/mitroo/mko/) and receive the IEP's approval for implementing educational activities. Thus, it is ensured that the programmes offered comply with the international educational standards and the acknowledged needs of the refugee target education group.

23. In addition, an open access platform with material developed in the framework of Intercultural Education programmes has been set up (http://www.iep.edu.gr/diapolitismiki), for teachers to identify the necessary material for their work. Finally, the IEP has set up a website on Refugee Education (http://www.iep.edu.gr/el/component/k2/conent/5-ekpaidefsi-prosfygon), in support of those involved in actions of refugee children formal and informal education.

24. **The General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning and Youth** of the MoE offers programmes of Greek language to adult refugees/migrants, as well as certification of their knowledge in Greek.

25. It should be mentioned that in the Accommodation Centers, most of Greek language lessons are offered by NGOs.

26. The MoE, in collaboration with experts and certification bodies, as well as with the Council of Europe (CoE), the EU, UNICEF and other institutions, elaborate a system of studies/knowledge certification, including certification of adult diplomas, e.g. of educators, for lessons in the children's languages, certification of students' diplomas, knowledge level certification for children, knowledge level certification in the Greek language and technical and vocational qualification certification.

27. The successful implementation of the Action Plan is also based on significant contributions by International Organizations (such as the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), local administration, as well as NGOs.

28. These organizations and bodies have contributed a lot in issues such as: the provision of material-technical infrastructure in the Accommodation Centers, the transportation of children to schools, the provision of children with school kits, refugees' mother tongue teaching (such as Arabic, Farsi, Kurmanji, etc.), the psycho-social support of

parents and children, adult education, creative and athletic activities, as well as the provision of translators and cultural mediators.

29. The Ministry of Education, through primary and secondary schools, also develops and participates in a variety of educational programmes, giving priority to refugee/immigration issues and aiming at raising pupils' awareness on human rights, preventing all kinds of discrimination and eliminating negative attitudes, school violence, prejudice and inequalities.

30. Some examples of programmes on Human Rights, Democracy and Active Citizenship, for teachers of primary and secondary education, are:

- The "Act" programme on active citizenship (E.U.), the Summer Academy on Education for democratic citizenship, Human rights education — EDC/HRE (the Wergeland Center — CoE), national dissemination events on the values of the CoE in the context of the Pestalozzi programme (CoE) for primary and secondary school teachers, etc;
- Various events on the remembrance of the Holocaust;
- Other programmes of the European Union (e-twinning, Erasmus+), of the Council of Europe (see above), UNESCO (Education for Peace and Human Rights), etc., focusing on human rights, where participate many primary and secondary schools of the country.

31. The Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the Council of Europe and the ENIC/NARIC of the U.K., Norway and Italy, initiated in 2016 an effort to develop a "passport" for the recognition of refugees' higher education qualifications, the so-called "Refugees' Qualifications Passport".

32. Finally, the Ministry of Education participates in short training on human rights for primary and secondary education teachers of the CoE (e.g. the Pestalozzi programme), etc.

33. Regarding the education of Greek repatriates and foreign students (refugee and migrants included,) the aim of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, is to assure equitable education to all, as well as to address the problem of school failure and dropouts.

34. The above categories of students can enroll in the aforementioned **Schools of Intercultural Education** and attend the Reception Classes, which offer Greek language lessons, supporting their smooth integration in the Hellenic education system. Furthermore, special programmes are applied, emphasizing on intercultural communication and on students' educational and cultural particularities. Teachers working in intercultural education schools are selected on the basis of their special knowledges in the field, their language skills, as well as qualifications related to teaching Greek as a foreign language.

35. Additionally, various programmes are implemented by different bodies for the above categories, such as the programme "Education of foreigners and repatriates" of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, introduced in the framework of the "Education and Lifelong Learning" Operational Programme of the Ministry of Education, implemented to public primary and secondary education schools nationwide. The programme seeks to improve school performance of foreign pupils and repatriates and facilitate their social integration. The project activities are the following: Support for reception classes, enhancing the teaching/learning of Greek, fostering intercultural communication at school level, training of teachers and members of the educational community, supporting the native language of students, psychological support program, connecting school and community, school networking, etc.

36. In addition, the **General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning and Youth has organized and operates the Programme** "Education of immigrants in Greek language, Greek history and the Greek civilization ODYSSEY". The implementation of the project has been assigned to **the Institute of Youth and Lifelong Learning**. The project aims at supporting students to acquire the language, as well as social and intercultural skills required for the social inclusion of students and their families.

37. Finally, the above Secretariat offers programmes of Greek language to refugee/migrant adults, as well as certification of their knowledge in Greek.

23 (f) Ensure regular and clear flow of information on immigration and asylum procedures to all migrants arriving to the State party, facilitate access to such procedures and to legal aid and ensure individual assessment of the asylum applications and due process guarantees throughout the asylum procedure, including protection from refoulement

1. *Regular and clear flow of information on asylum procedures*

38. The Asylum Service distributes to the applicants an information leaflet in 19 languages, which provides the basic information with reference to the procedure to be followed. The above information is also posted on the website of the Asylum Service (www.asylo.gov.gr). The Asylum Service also has social media accounts and distributes free of charge printed leaflets with information (in eighteen languages) for asylum seekers on the islands and the mainland. Apart from the above, the "Asylum Service App" was launched in the spring of 2017 on a pilot basis. The application allows the asylum seekers and the beneficiaries of international protection to follow all the developments in the field of asylum procedure using a mobile phone or a tablet. To third-country nationals or stateless persons being in detention Centres or at border crossing points, information is provided in relation to the possibility of submission of international protection application, both by the Asylum Service and by representatives of the European Asylum Support Office assisting it, in cooperation with other authorities active at these points. Information is also provided to the persons concerned within the framework of the relocation procedure. Further the persons concerned are informed through the internet regarding the issue of Uniform Residence Permit and the issue of travel documents (TDV).

2. *Facilitation of access to the asylum procedure and to legal aid*

39. Greece's intake of asylum seekers in 2016 was one of the highest in Europe, both in absolute figures and especially in terms of the ratio between asylum seekers and permanent residents. The Asylum Service registered 51,092 international protection applications in 2016. Similarly, by the end of September 2017, 42,935 applications were already registered by the Asylum Service, revealing that the rate of registrations remains at least as high as the previous year. The recognition rate reached 44.7%[1] during the first nine months of 2017. Indicatively, for Syrian asylum seekers it stands at 99.5%, for Iraqis at 72.2% and for Afghans at 65.9%.

40. As of the end of July 2017, the Asylum Service operates ten Regional Asylum Offices (RAO's) and twelve Asylum Units (AU's) which means that adequate regional coverage is provided. The Service's staff, consisting of 673 permanent and contracted employees, has tripled in size within four years and is being assisted by EASO's deployments (of around 140 members of own staff and experts from the Member States) as well as by20 members of staff deployed by UNHCR. Moreover, the work of the Asylum Service is assisted by 25 police officers and around 300 interpreters from the NGO METAdrasi and from EASO.

41. Asylum seekers may register an international protection application at the Asylum Service by presenting themselves at the nearest Regional Asylum Office or Asylum Unit. Nevertheless, the use of "Skype" for the registration of applications, despite occasional technical difficulties, has contributed significantly to facilitating access to the asylum procedure as well as to the breaking down of the exploitation rings asylum seekers used to resort in order to access the asylum procedure before 2013. Moreover, as of 1 August 2017, the Skype line is available 25 hours per week for applicants who fall under the competence of the RAO of Attica and 23 hours for applicants who reside in the rest of the mainland.

[1] In absolute figures, out of a total of 33,697 decisions (of all kinds) issued by the first instance examination during the first seven months of 2017, 5,088 decisions issued granted international protection.

42. Furthermore, by Law 4375/2016 (art.44, par.3), the provision of legal assistance free of charge was instituted at the second instance, that is for cases being examined by the Appeal Committees. With regard to implementing provisions of the law regarding legal assistance free of charge at the second instance, the roster of lawyers of the Asylum Service has been constituted. In addition, legal aid free of charge has been provided to applicants through UNHCR, by virtue of a Memorandum of cooperation between the Ministry of Migration Policy and the UNHCR.

3. *Individual assessment and due process guarantees throughout the asylum procedure, including protection from refoulement*

43. Everyone who applies for asylum in Greece has his/her application treated on a case-by-case basis, in line with EU and international law requirements and the principle of *non-refoulement*. In each case there are individual interviews, individual assessments and the right of appeal. There are no blanket or automatic returns of migrants or asylum seekers.

44. Furthermore, regarding protection of asylum seekers from refoulement, the Asylum Service notes that despite the pressure exercised on Greece to return large numbers of irregular migrants to Turkey, practically no asylum seekers were returned to Turkey, unless their claims had been examined on their merits, or unless they had withdrawn their asylum applications.

45. Finally, application of the first country of asylum concept (as foreseen in Article 35 of Directive 2013/32/EC "on common procedures for granting and withdrawing the status of international protection (recast)" (L 180/29.6.2013)) which would have had as a consequence the non-suspensive effect of appeals, has never been used.

46. The competent Services of the Hellenic Police have given clear orders and instructions related to the protection and respect of the human rights of all irregular migrants who arrive in Greece, with particular emphasis on their right to apply for the provision of international protection and the prescribed legal remedies.

47. Additionally, no foreign citizen under detention who applies for international protection shall be returned back before their request has been examined (wish to submit a request for international protection, registration of request, examination at first instance, review of the complaint on admissibility), in full respect of the requirements of the Geneva Convention and the procedures prescribed in Directive 2013/32/EU which was transposed into our national legislation by Law 4375/2016 "Organization and operation of Asylum Service, Appeals Authority, Reception and Identification Service…" regarding the common procedures for granting and withdrawing the status of international protection (recast)" L. 180/29.06.2013) provisions on the employment of the beneficiaries of international protection and other provisions."

25 (b) Investigate instances of labour discrimination and labour exploitation of migrant workers and persons belonging to ethnic minorities, prosecute abusive employers and compensate victims

48. Third country nationals who legally live and work in Greece hold the same rights as Greek citizens with regard to employment. In addition, as provided for in article 21 of Law 4251/2014 (Gov.Gaz. A'80), they are insured in the same social security organizations and hold the same insurance rights as Greek nationals. At the same time, the provisions of Legislative Decree 57/1973, as applicable, regarding social protection, apply also to third country nationals who legally live in Greece.

49. Furthermore, by virtue of articles 68, 69 and 71 of Law 4375/2016 (Gov.Gaz. A 51) the work permit is no more a pre-requisite for the access to the labour market of those applying for international protection, the beneficiaries of international protection (refugees and holders of the status of subsidiary protection) as well as the holders of the status of residence for humanitarian reasons. Thus, our legislative framework facilitates the integration of the specific categories of third country nationals to the labour market of our country.

50. In addition, according to article 70 of the same law, the beneficiaries of international protection (refugees and holders of the status of subsidiary protection), persons who have been granted the status of residence for humanitarian reasons as well as the members of their families, hold the right to participate in educational programmes for adults, related to employment and vocational training, under the same terms and conditions applicable to Greek nationals, as long as they hold a valid residence permit, as required by the relevant provisions.

51. With regard to the labour and social insurance rights of third country nationals working in the country illegally, the provisions of Law 4052/2012 (Gov.Gaz. A 41) are the basic tool to guarantee such rights.

52. In particular, article 79 of the abovementioned law provides for the prohibition of the employment of third country nationals illegally staying in the country.

53. Furthermore, according to article 80, the employers are obliged to verify the possession of a valid residence permit or another valid authorization to stay in the country, before employing a third country national, keep a copy of such residence permit or other authorization to stay during the third country national's employment and finally, to notify the competent authorities of the employment and the start of employment of third country nationals.

54. Although the employment of illegally residing third country nationals is prohibited, such citizens enjoy a number of rights with regard to their work and insurance.

55. According to the article 81 of the abovementioned law, the employer who employs an illegally residing third country national has the obligation to:

- Pay to the illegally employed third country national any remuneration due. The agreed level of remuneration is considered to be at least the minimum salary or daily wages prescribed by the legislation, the sectoral, occupational, business agreements, in accordance with the established practice in the relevant occupational branches or the business concerned, unless the employer or the employee proves that the due remuneration was different, within the context of the applicable legislation;
- Pay to the competent agencies, an amount equal to all contributions and taxes that the employer would have paid if the third country national had been legally employed, including administrative fines with any penalty payments for delays;
- Pay all expenses required for sending back payments to the country to which the third country national has returned or has been returned.

56. In order to apply the abovementioned provisions, it is presumed that the employment relationship has lasted at least three months, unless the employer or the employee, among others, proves otherwise.

57. Furthermore, article 83 provides that illegally employed persons may, like legally employed persons, submit by themselves or through third parties, with their consent, to the local labor centers, any complaints prescribed in the labor legislation against their employer. The provision of assistance to third country nationals in submitting complaints shall in no case be considered as facilitation of the illegal entry, transit and residence of the illegally employed person.

58. At the same time, the illegally employed third country nationals may, like any legally employed persons, introduce a claim before the competent courts and the competent authorities for any outstanding remuneration and, more generally, assert their rights under the law, in accordance with the labour legislation in force and enforce the relevant court judgments against their employers, even if they have returned or have been returned to return to their countries.

59. The illegally employed third country citizens may receive and transfer abroad, based on the procedures determined in the applicable legislation, any remuneration due that has been judicially or extra-judicially recovered from their employers. In case they have returned or have been returned to the country of origin or descent, all amounts that have actually been recovered as outstanding remuneration by the legal representative of the

illegally employed third country citizen, are deposited at the Loans and Deposit Fund in favour of the beneficiary or/and his or her universal and special successors and may be collected by the beneficiaries, as the case may be, or by their legal representatives who may also ensure, where applicable, the transfer of the payment to the place of their residence or stay. Any cost arising for sending back the payment may be sought from the employer by any legal means.

60. Finally, based on the provisions of article 91 of Law 4052/2012, the Labor Inspectorate has become the main monitoring mechanism for verifying the observance of the specific prohibition by the employers and the businesses.

Comments on Paragraph 25 (b)

61. Human exploitation may serve different purposes, such as sexual exploitation, forced criminality, forced labor, among others. Based on European statistics, forced labor shows a significant increase in Europe and in Greece. The Office of the National Rapporteur on trafficking in human beings (ONR) has recognized this tendency and has already taken up a number of actions towards tackling the phenomenon. Thus, the ONR collaborates closely with the Ministry of Labor and, in this context, Labor Inspectors participate in the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), as they are considered important contributors to the 1st level identification of victims of human trafficking, including for labor exploitation purposes. In addition, the ONR in collaboration with the National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government (EKDDA), which is the national strategic agent for the development of the Human Resources of the Public Administration and Local Government, is on the process to organize specialized trainings for Labor Inspectors on first-level identification of victims of human trafficking. This action is expected to take place in early 2018. Another important step that the ONR has taken towards the direction to tackling human trafficking for labor exploitation purposes is the development of the Public-Private Partnerships initiative — a work-in-progress aiming to strengthen the collaboration between State agencies and private sector in order to fight more effectively labor exploitation (slavery-free supply chains, zero tolerance consumer ethic). Furthermore, the ONR currently contributes to the organization of training and awareness-raising events that prioritize the combat of forced labor and labor exploitation.

62. During the last years, legislative updates have taken place creating a safer working space for (economic and/or undocumented) migrants and, in general, a more solid protection system for vulnerable populations such as undocumented migrants, asylum seekers, and victims of trafficking against labor exploitation. Below, the most important legislative updates towards that direction are cited.

63. The Migration and Social Integration Code 4251/2014 (hereinafter: Code), [in addition to the existing EU-common provisions (Directive 2004/81/EU) transposed into national law by art. 49-56 of the Code], provides for the granting of a residence permit for humanitarian reasons to third country nationals, victims of trafficking, even if the person does not cooperate with the competent authorities, under the condition that the person has been recognized as victim of trafficking by the competent Prosecutor.

64. In this respect, Law 4332/2015, which amended law 4251/2014, has integrated all the provisions of the joint ministerial decision 30651/2014 (which provides for the granting of residence permits for, among others, victims of trafficking who do not cooperate with State authorities) in its text and since then the joint ministerial decision is no longer in force. The relevant provisions are included into art. 19A of the Code under the title *Residence permits on humanitarian grounds*.

65. In particular, as provided by art. 19A of the Code, victims of human trafficking who do not cooperate with the competent authorities, are granted, free of charge, a residence permit for humanitarian reasons, which is issued following a decision of the Minister of Migration Policy. The residence permit is of one-year duration, grants the right to dependent employment or provision of services or provision of work and can be renewed for two years each time, only under the precondition that the relevant criminal proceedings continue. If criminal proceedings are not pending, the residence permit is renewable for one

year. The holders of this permit have free of charge access to medical services and health care (art. 33 of law 4368/2016).

66. The residence permit granted may be renewed for one of the grounds of law 4251/2014 in the event that the reasons for which it was issued are no longer valid. The Minister of Migration Policy may define the categories of paragraph 1, where the right of renewal should be exercised following the opinion of the Commission of par. 1, art. 134 of the Code, once the reasons for issuing this category of residence permit no longer exist.

67. A significant legislative development is also the establishment of a parliamentary committee against human trafficking (June 2016) by the Hellenic Parliament. This committee is responsible for monitoring developments, legislative updates included, as well as following the implementation of counter-THB policies and measures.

68. Beyond the legislative updates, and in order to further tackle labor exploitation and ensure that a more personalized procedure for asylum-application evaluation is applied, a number of other actions have been carried out. For example, in order to promote a more effective first-level identification of victims of trafficking, specialized trainings have been carried out (e.g. by the EASO, Institute of Child Health) addressing first-line professionals working for the Asylum Service and for the Reception and Identification Service. More trainings addressing first-line professionals are currently planned in collaboration with FRONTEX, EASO, Asylum Service, Reception and Identification Service and the Hellenic Police. In addition, both the Reception and Identification Service and the Asylum Service participate in the National Referral Mechanism and, in that way, victims of human trafficking or possible victims of human trafficking that may be identified during the reception/identification or the asylum procedure are able to receive timely and appropriate protection, since the Social Protection Services are immediately notified on such occasions.